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John Gill's

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

Book 7—Chapter 11

**OF THE FINAL STATE OF THE
SAINTS IN HEAVEN**

There is a state of happiness, which the spirits, or souls, of just men enter into immediately after the separation of them from the body; of which we have treated in a preceding chapter. But after the resurrection, which is of the saints unto everlasting life, and therefore is called the resurrection of life; and when the general judgment is over, and the invitation is given, "Come, ye blessed," &c. then "the righteous" shall go "into life eternal," soul and body (Matthew 25:34,46), which is the state now to be considered. And, first, the state of happiness itself, and then the eternity of it.

1. The state of happiness the saints are possessed of after the resurrection, and general judgment, in soul and body, expressed in the passage above quoted, by "eternal life," and very frequently elsewhere. But it is not animal life, which lies in the conjunction of soul and body, and a continuance of that for ever, which is meant by eternal life; for the wicked will live such a life upon the resurrection; for as there will be a resurrection of the just, so of the unjust; they will live again, and live for evermore; though their living will be no other than the second and eternal death; for they will be destroyed, both body and soul, in hell; not as to the substance of either, but as to the comfort and happiness of both; for it is not barely living, but living well, comfortably and happily, that is properly life; in which sense the word is used (Ps. 22:26), and such is the life the saints will live in heaven, in soul and body, in the enjoyment of God, as their covenant God; and thrice happy are they that are in such a case; and in being with Christ! which is far better than to live in this world: and in having the communion of the Holy Spirit, than which nothing can be more comfortable; and in the society of angels and saints: all which is most eligible and

desirable. In treating on this state, I shall take much the same method as in the preceding chapter. I shall,

1a. First, prove that there will be a state of happiness of good men in the world to come; for "godliness has the promise of that life which is to come"; that is, of happiness in it. And this may be made to appear, in some respect,

1a1. First, from the light of nature and reason; for though the kind of happiness is not to be discovered and demonstrated by it; yet some general notion of future happiness may be evinced from it.

1a1a. A general notion of happiness after death, has obtained among the wiser sort of heathens, who have had only the light of nature to guide them; unless some general traditions transmitted to them, especially among those who have given any credit to the immortality of the soul. Hence they speak of the Elysian fields, and islands of the blessed, as the seat and habitation of pious persons after death; and which they describe after a carnal and earthly manner; as grassy plains, and flowery meads; and as abounding with all manner of delicious fruits; and as in a most temperate climate, free of all wintry weather and blustering storms, and of scorching heat; and where they are fanned with gentle zephyrs, and delighted with flowing fountains and purling streams; and are continually regaling themselves with nectar and ambrosia. Though even their images of those things, Tertullian thinks they have borrowed from the sacred writings, and the description of the heavenly state therein: "If, says he, we speak of paradise as a place of divine pleasantness, appointed for the reception of holy spirits—the Elysian fields seize upon and engross their faith." But those things are not only said by their poets, but by their wise and grave philosophers; as Plato, Plutarch, Seneca, and others.

1a1b. From a natural desire in mankind after happiness, and which is universal; and yet it is certain it is not attained in this present life, though eagerly sought for, in one way or another. Some seek for it in natural wisdom and knowledge; some in wealth and riches; others in the honors of the world, in fame and popular applause; anti others in the gratification of sensual appetites and lusts; but is never found to satisfaction in either; and as abundantly appears from the first and second chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes. This is only found in God, the chiefest good; and that not to perfection in this life. Now either this desire of happiness is implanted in vain, which is not reasonable to suppose; or there must be a future state, in which this happiness will be enjoyed, at least by some of the individuals of human nature, even by all good men; who, at the resurrection, and not before, will be completely happy to full satisfaction; even when they shall awake in the likeness of God.

1a1c. From the unequal distribution of things in the present state; which makes the providences of God very intricate and perplexed, with difficulties not easy to be solved; and which cannot be solved without supposing a future state: here wicked men have a large portion of good things; and good men have a large share of evil things, afflictions, and distresses; and if their hope of happiness was bounded by this

life, they would be of all men most miserable; especially such who are called to endure sharp and severe sufferings: but their hope extends beyond it; as it is reasonable it should; when, as they have suffered in the cause of goodness, truth, and righteousness, that they should be glorified together; and that their present momentary afflictions should work for them, as they do, an eternal weight of glory. But this more abundantly appears,

1a2. Secondly, from divine revelation; by which life and immortality are brought to light; or an immortal life of happiness is set in the clearest light; and which may be strongly concluded,

1a2a. From the promise of God concerning it. "This is the promise," the grand and principal promise; and which includes and secures all the rest; "He," that is, God, "hath promised us," in the covenant of grace, and which lies in his word, "even eternal life" (1 John 2:25), which gives hope and assurance of it, and in which it issues: and this promise was made very early, even "before the world began," and by God that "cannot lie," and therefore to be depended on as sure and certain; and besides, it is in "Christ"; and not the promise only, but the thing itself (Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:1; 1 John 5:11), and in this lies the happiness of the saints (Jam. 1:12).

1a2b. From the predestination of men unto it; there are "vessels of mercy afore prepared" in the mind, and by the will of God, for this future "glory" and happiness; who are chosen "to the obtaining," or to the enjoyment, "of the glory of Christ"; to behold his glory, and appear with him in glory; who are "ordained to eternal life," and therefore believe to the saving of their souls: and which act of the grace, and will of God, can never be frustrated and made void; for "whom he did predestinate—they he also glorified" (Rom. 9:23; 2 Thess. 2:14; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:30).

1a2c. From the preparation of this happiness for them; this consists of things unseen and unheard of, and not to be conceived of by carnal minds, which God has "prepared" for them that love him, fear him, and wait for him; and which preparation was made in eternity; for it is a "kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world"; and which will only be given to, and will most certainly be given to, those for whom "it is prepared" of God (1 Cor. 2:9; Matthew 25:34 20:23).

1a2d. From Christ's actual possession of it for his people, in their name; and from the preparation he is making of it for them; he is entered into heaven as the forerunner for them, and has taken possession of it in their name, as their head and representative; and in whom, as so considered, they are already set down in heavenly places, and shall be in person, most certainly, ere long; for he is gone before to "prepare a place" for them, in his Father's house in heaven, where are many mansions, by his intercession for them, which is always prevalent; and therefore he assures them, he will "come again," and "receive them" to himself, "that where he is, they may be also," partakers of his glory and happiness (Heb. 6:20; Eph 2:6; John 14:2,3).

1a2e. From the effectual calling of men to eternal life and happiness: "Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called," says the apostle Paul to Timothy; and to which happiness every man is called, who is called by grace: hence we read of the saints being called of God to "his kingdom and glory"; and of their being called "unto his eternal glory, by Jesus Christ". Now between calling and glorification there is an inseparable connection; "Whom he called—they he also glorified" (1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10; Rom. 8:30).

1a2f. From the grace of God implanted in the heart, and the earnest of the Spirit there. The grace of God, which is wrought in the heart in regeneration, is a "well of living water, springing up into everlasting life," and issues in it; and the Spirit of God, in his operations on the souls of men, works them up "for that selfsame thing," eternal glory and happiness; and of which his indwelling also in them, is the earnest and pledge; for he is said to be "given" as an "earnest," and to be "the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession"; that is, until all the purchased ones are redeemed from mortality, death, and the grave; and therefore as sure as they have the earnest, they shall enjoy the inheritance, which is eternal life (John 4:14; 2 Col. 5:5; Eph 2:14).

1a2g. From the present experiences of the saints, from those foretastes they sometimes have of future glory and happiness; like the Israelites, have some clusters of Canaan's grapes, some of the good land by the way, as a specimen and pledge of what they shall enjoy when they come into that better country; they now receive the first fruits of the Spirit, which encourage them to hope for the glorious harvest of the adoption of children: they now, at times, have communion with God in private, and also in public, in his house and ordinances, when they are as the gate and suburbs of heaven to them; and so, by inward felt experience know, from what they find in themselves, that there is something better, and more excellent for them in heaven.

1a2h. From the desires of the saints after future happiness. They choose to be with Christ, as more eligible than to be here; they desire to be clothed upon, with their house from heaven, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, that they may be present with the Lord; and press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ (Phil. 1:23; 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:2,8). And now those desires in the hearts of the saints, are not formed by the Spirit of God in vain.

1a2i. From the assurance of it some of the saints have had, both of the Old and of the New Testament; the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others, all died in the faith of the better country they were seeking, and were desirous of; the psalmist Asaph expresses his strong faith of it, that "God would receive him to glory"; and the apostle Paul, in his own name, and in the name of other Christians, says, "we know," we are well assured, that "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (Heb. 11:13; Ps. 73:24; 2 Cor. 5:1).

1a2j. This happiness is begun already in this life; in regeneration men pass from the death of sin, into a life of grace; and a life of grace, is the life of glory begun; he that believes in Christ hath everlasting life; is possessed of it in part, and has the earnest and the beginning of it; eternal life is founded in, and begins with the knowledge of God and Christ (John 5:24; 6:47; 17:3).

1a2k. Lastly, There are instances of saints already in heaven, anti some in their bodies, as well as in their souls, as Enoch and Elijah; and, as it is highly probable, the saints that arose at Christ's resurrection, and went with him to heaven; (see Luke 13:28 16:22) and as sure as they are there, all the rest of the saints will. I go on to consider,

1b. Secondly, the names, phrases, and epithets, used of this happiness; which may serve to convey to us some ideas of the nature of it.

1b1. First, the names by which it is called; both as a place and as a state. As a place,

1b1a. It is called heaven; for there this happiness lies, which is called the reward in heaven, the hope laid up in heaven, the inheritance reserved in heaven, and often the kingdom of heaven; and which is no other than the third heaven, where is the throne of God, whither Christ in human nature is gone, and there received, and is the habitation of the holy angels.

1b1b. It goes by the name of "paradise," in allusion to the garden of Eden, a place of pleasure and delight (2 Cor. 12:4; Luke 23:43), in the midst of which, Christ, the tree of life, stands, laden with all manner of precious fruit, for the solace and delight of the blessed inhabitants; and where are fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore (Rev. 2:7; 22:2; Ps. 16:11).

1b1c. It is represented as a place of "light"; it is called the light of life; the inheritance of the saints in light; and needs no natural nor artificial light to illuminate it; where God and the Lamb are the light of it, and the angels of light dwell (John 8:12; Col. 1:12; Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

1b1d. It is signified by an "house" to dwell in; an house not made with the hands of men, but is a building of God; in which there are many mansions, room enough for the many sons the great Captain of salvation will bring to glory, who is gone before them, to prepare them for them; even in his Father's house (2 Cor. 5:1; John 14:2).

1b1e. It is said to be a "city," a city of God's preparing, of which he is the builder and maker, and which has foundations firm and strong, and so is a continuing and lasting one (Heb 11:10,16; 13:14) and of this city the saints are now citizens; "our conversation," το πολιτευμα, "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20).

1b1f. It is called, "the better country" (Heb. 11:16): better than this world, or any country in it; better than the good land beyond Jordan, Canaan, the type of it: it is

"the land that is very far off," even in the highest heavens; the "land of uprightness," where there is nothing but perfect purity and integrity, and where only upright persons dwell, (Isa. 33:17; Ps. 143:10). And as a state, it is sometimes called,

1b1f1. An "inheritance" (Acts 20:32), and elsewhere, in allusion to the land of Canaan, distributed by lot for an inheritance to the children of Israel; or in allusion to inheritances among men, which are not acquired and purchased by them; but are bequeathed, or come to them by relations, and are transmitted from father to son; and so the heavenly glory is not obtained by the works of men, or is a purchase of theirs; but is bequeathed to them by their heavenly Father, and comes to them by his will and testament, upon, by, and through the death of the testator, Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:15,16).

1b1f2. A "kingdom," often called the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, of which the saints are heirs; and they are styled kings and princes, being possessed of the kingdom of grace, as they will be of kingdom of glory; to which they are called, and is prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and which it is their Father's good pleasure to give them (Jam. 2:5; Matthew 25:34; Luke 12:32).

1b1f3. A "crown"; a crown of righteousness and life, a crown of glory, that fades not away, an incorruptible one; which serves to set forth the grandeur of this state (2 Tim. 4:8; Jam. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25).

1b1f4. It is expressed by "glory" itself (Ps. 84:11; 73:24) as being exceeding glorious, beyond all conception and expression; it is said to be "a weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17), in allusion to the ponderous crowns of princes; it will lie in beholding the glory of Christ, and in having a glory revealed in the saints, and in having a glory upon them, both in soul and body.

1b1f5. It has the name of peace, into which good men enter at death (Ps. 37:37; Isa 57:2), there being nothing in this state to ruffle and disturb, but all tranquil, serene, and calm; no sin within, nor sinful men without: no sorrow and affliction; no pricking brier, nor grieving thorn, throughout the land.

1b1f6. It is signified by a rest, which remains for the people of God, after this toilsome life is over (Heb. 4:9), in allusion to the land of Canaan, a land of rest to the Israelites, after their weary travels in the wilderness; or to the Sabbath, the day of rest, this state being all day, and all Sabbath; a complete rest of body and soul, from all labors, troubles, and enemies whatever.

1b1f7. It is called "the joy of the Lord," into which Christ's faithful servants will be invited to enter (Matthew 25:21,23), a joy that can never be taken away from them, a fullness of joy, a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

1b2. Secondly, there are various phrases also by which this happy state is expressed, and epithets used of it, which show the happiness of it; as by being in "Abraham's bosom"; and sitting down as at a table and a feast, with him and others, expressive of the blessed communion of the saints (Luke 16:22; Matthew 8:12), but more especially by being with Christ, and sitting with him on his throne (Phil; 1:23; Rev. 3:21), and by being fed, and led by him, to fountains of living waters (Rev. 7:17). The various epithets of this state, besides what have been given, are worthy of notice. It is, as yet, an unseen happiness; it consists of things not seen at present; and which faith and hope are only concerned with; and saints have only some glimpse of it, which encourages to wait for it (2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1; Rom. 8:24,25). It is future, it is yet to come; a glory that shall be revealed; grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Christ, and does not yet appear what it shall be: it is beyond all "compare"; the wealth and riches, the glories and grandeur of this world, are trifles to it; yea, the sufferings of the saints, their purest services, are not worthy to be compared with it (Rom. 8:18), it is an "enduring substance," a never fading inheritance, a crown of glory that fades not away; the glory of this world passeth away; but this glory will never pass away: but of the eternity of it more hereafter. I proceed to show,

1c. Thirdly, the parts of this happiness, or wherein it will consist.

1c1. First, in a freedom from all evils, both of soul and body; from all evils that affect the soul.

1c1a. From the evil of evils, sin, which is exceeding evil in itself, and the cause of all evil: but in this happy state there will be an entire deliverance from it; even,

1c1a1. From all temptations to it, either from within or from without; glorified saints will have nothing within and about themselves, no sinful lust in their hearts to tempt, entice, and draw them away, as now; their souls being the spirits of just men made perfect; nothing in or about their bodies to incline and lead to sin, which are now vile, and have a world of iniquity in them; but then made like the glorious body of Christ: nor will they have any from without to solicit them to sin; not Satan, for he is cast out of heaven, and has not, nor never will have, place there any more; nor wicked men, whose evil communications now are very ensnaring and corrupting; but these will have no standing in the congregation of the righteous.

1c1a2. From the dominion of sin; it has not an entire dominion over the saints now, much less will it have any in heaven; nor will any attempts be made to bring them into captivity to it; nor will they be in any danger of it.

1c1a3. From the commission of it, and so of guilt through it: now none live without it, and daily need to have their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb; fresh guilt arises in their consciences, which must be removed the same way: but the saints will now be impeccable, not capable of sinning, as Adam was in impotence,

and the angels before their confirmation; since the former sinned, and so did many of the latter. Yea,

1c1a4. The saints in heaven will be free from the very being of sin; now it has a place, and dwells and operates in them; but then the Canaanite will be no more in the land.

1c1a5. They will be rid of an evil heart of unbelief, and be no more distressed with doubts and fears: now unbelief is a sin that easily besets them; and without are fightings, and within are fears; but then, as there will be no occasion to say to themselves, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" so neither will they hear such a rebuke, "Wherefore didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith!"

1c1b. From the evil one, Satan and his temptations, Adam was not free from him in the garden of Eden; but saints will be in the paradise above: now he goes about like a roaring lion, terrifying and distressing; but then they will be out of the reach of his hideous noise, and where his fiery darts will never penetrate: he will be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, during the saints reign with Christ a thousand years; and though when they are ended he will be let loose for a little while, yet he will be taken up again, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where he will remain for ever, and never more be able to give the least molestation and disturbance.

1c1c. From evil men; whether profane sinners, with whose ungodly conversation they shall be no more vexed; as Lot, David, Isaiah, and other saints have been here: or violent persecutors, who here oppress them, and distress them, in person, in name, in body, and estate; but now will cease from troubling them, not being able to do them the least hurt, nor give them the least uneasiness: or hypocrites in Zion; there will be no more tares among the wheat, nor goats among the sheep, nor foolish virgins among the wise; they that offend, and do iniquity, will be gathered out of the kingdom of Christ. This happiness will consist in a freedom from all bodily evils; or which affect the outward circumstances. No more penury, nor straitness, as to external things; no more want of food, of drink, and of clothing, which is sometimes now the lot of saints; they will hunger and thirst no more! there will be no more racking pains, nor loathsome diseases; no more sickness; no more death: nor will they be any more subject to disappointments from friends or others; nor to losses in the business of life; nor to loss of friends and relations by death; nor to anything that may mar their joy and pleasure.

1c2. Secondly, This happy state will consist in the enjoyment of all that is good.

1c2a. In the enjoyment of God himself, who is the chief good, who is the portion of his people now, and will be their portion for evermore; in enjoying communion with him, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the highest perfection, and without any interruption, and to all eternity; in the beatific vision of him, in beholding him as he is; not his nature and essence, so as to comprehend it; but they shall see him so as to have clearer, fuller, and more distinct apprehensions of his perfections and glory;

especially his shining in and through Christ, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

1c2b. In being with Christ, and beholding his glory, the glory of his divine Person, with the eyes of their understanding, being more opened and enlarged; and the glory of his human nature with the eyes of their body; they shall see him in the flesh crowned with glory and honor, who was crowned with thorns, spit upon, buffeted, crucified, pierced, and wounded for them.

1c2c. In having the company and society of angels, and of one another. They will now be come, in the fullest sense, to an innumerable company of angels; and will converse with them, and join them in adoring the divine perfections, and blessing and praising God and the Lamb; they will then sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other patriarchs, with the prophets, apostles, and all the saints in the kingdom of heaven; they will have communion with each other, though not in the same way and manner as now, in the use of ordinances, of which there will be then no need; yet there will be a social worship, in which they will be jointly concerned; in singing hallelujahs, and in ascriptions of blessing, glory, and praise, to the sacred and eternal Three. They will converse and discourse with each other about divine, spiritual, and heavenly things; in what language it is not easy to say; though "tongues" will "cease," the multiplicity of languages now used, that jargon introduced at Babel or since; though some think everyone will speak in his own language the wonderful things of God; but this is not probable, since then mutual converse would not be general; yet it is reasonable to suppose some one language will be used to employ the tongue; some have thought of the Hebrew language spoke in paradise, and by patriarchs, prophets, &c. but perhaps it may be a language more pure, more perfect, more elegant, and more refined, than ever was spoken by men on earth. It is also highly probable the saints will know one another personally; which seems necessary to their perfect happiness: though they will know no man after the flesh: all natural relations and civil connections will now cease; and whether it will give any peculiar and superior pleasure, to see a relation or friend in this happy state, more than to see another saint, is a question not now to be resolved; as it will give no uneasiness that any relation or friend is missing there, which would mar their happiness. To all which may be added, the communion of the saints will be with the utmost peace and concord; they will dwell together in unity, in the highest perfection; there will be no jars nor discord among them; no envy and vexation among brethren; love will be arrived to its greatest pitch of vigor and glory, and continue so for ever.

1c2d. This happiness will consist in perfect holiness. Sanctification will now be completed in soul and body: the soul, as before observed, will be entirely free from the very being of sin, as well as from any act of it; and from guilt and pollution, arising from it: and the body, though vile when laid in the grave, will, being raised, be like to the glorious body of Christ: and saints, both in soul and body, will be without fault before the throne, without any spot or stain of sin, or wrinkle or

deformity, or any such thing; and so be perfectly fit for communion with God, with angels, and one another.

1c2e. It will consist in the enjoyment of the greatest glory, both in soul and body, beyond all present conception and expression. There will be a glory revealed in the saints, which is beyond all comparison; and a glory put upon them that is inconceivable; a glory upon their souls, which lie in perfect purity in them, in having the righteousness of Christ upon them, and the shining robes of light and bliss: a glory upon their bodies, which will be raised glorious, powerful, spiritual, and incorruptible, and ever continue; as Christ will appear in glory, they will appear in glory with him, and be made like unto him.

1c2f. From all which will arise the greatest joy and felicity; fullness of joy, joy unspeakable and full of glory! the redeemed of the Lord shall now be come to "Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

1d. Fourthly, It may be considered, whether there will be any degrees in the final happiness of the saints; or whether one saint will have a greater share of happiness than another. It appears, there will be degrees in the punishment of the wicked in hell; and some think there will be degrees in the happiness of the saints in heaven; and others not: and there are some things advanced on both sides not to be despised. Those who are for degrees of glory do not think there will be any want of happiness in any, nor any uneasy desires after more; nor any envyings of others; nor do they suppose, with the Papists, that the distribution will be made according to the proper merit of men; but that the reward will be a reward of grace, and not of debt: yet, as it seeks to incline to the popish notion, and to have a look that way, it is not so agreeable; and besides, those passages of scripture which are usually brought to support it, as Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:14 &c. 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 belong to the kingdom state, as we have seen, and not to the ultimate glory. The arguments against degrees in glory seem with me to preponderate. As,

1d1. That all the people of God are loved by him with the same love; they are not loved one sooner than another, for they are all loved with an everlasting love; nor one more than another: there are no degrees in the love of God, as in himself, though the manifestations of it may be more or less; yet the favor he bears to his own peculiar people is the same, and so always continues to the end, and to all eternity.

1d2. They are all chosen together in Christ, as not one before another, their election being together in Christ, before the foundation of the world; so not one more than another: the election of one may be manifested before another, and be more clearly manifested to one than to another; but the act is the same; so is the glory they are chosen to.

1d3. They are equally interested in the same covenant of grace, which is an everlasting one; and the one were as early in it as the others; and are all alike blessed with the same spiritual blessings of it; and have the same grace given them in Christ before the world began, one as another; and have all the same right to the exceeding great and precious promises of it.

1d4. They are all equally redeemed with the same price, which is the precious blood of Christ! (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18,19), and though they are redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, yet it is by the same blood (Rev. 5:9), as the half shekel for the ransom of the souls of the Israelites was the same for one as another, the rich did not give more, nor the poor less (Ex. 30:12-15), so the ransom price for Christ's people is the same, which is himself (1 Tim. 2:6).

1d5. They are all justified by the same righteousness; it is unto all, and upon all them that believe; there is no difference between greater and lesser believers; though one may have more faith than another, that is, as to exercise; yet no man has more righteousness than another: and in everyone it is the same precious faith as to its nature and object; it is by one and the same righteousness that all the seed of Israel, the spiritual seed of Christ, are justified; Christ's righteousness is a garment that reaches down to the feet, and covers the meanest member of his body as well as the greatest.

1d6. All are equally the sons of God, are predestinated to the same adoption of children; and which they receive through the redemption that is by Christ; and from whom they receive the same power, authority, and privilege to become the children of God, one as another; they are all the children of God by faith in Christ, and are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and being children, they are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; all alike so, they are all firstborn ones (Heb. 12:23).

1d7. They are all kings and priests unto God, made so by Christ; their office and dignity are alike; they are alike raised by his grace and favor, from a low estate, to sit among princes, and to inherit the same throne of glory.

1d8. The future glory and happiness of the saints is frequently expressed by words of the singular number; showing, that though it belongs to more, it is the same to all, or that all have an equal right to and share in it; thus it is called, the inheritance of the saints in light; the inheritance reserved in heaven; a kingdom it is their Father's good pleasure to give them; a crown of righteousness laid up for them; and is signified by a penny given to the laborers alike, who came into the vineyard at different parts of the day (Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:4; Luke 12:32; 2 Tim. 4:8; Matthew 20:9,10). It is a question moved by some, whether there will not be an increase of the happiness of the saints in a future state, or some addition made unto it, and improvement of it, by fresh discoveries of the mysteries of grace and of providence, that may be gradually made, which may afford new pleasure and delight. This is not easy to determine; some are inclined to think there will be an increase, as in the

angels, who desire to "look" more into the mysteries of grace (1 Pet. 1:12), and have a greater knowledge of them, which may be an addition to their happiness. But it is not so certain, that angels by nature are meant in the text referred to; but angels by office, ministers of the gospel: besides, the happiness of the good angels may not be as yet complete until all the elect men are gathered in; as the punishment of the evil angels will not be full until the day of judgment: and if any addition is gradually made to the happiness of the saints in heaven, it must be imperfect until that addition is made, and must continue so till the last is made; which does not seem consistent with the perfection of their state. However, much may be said for the growing happiness of the saints onward in eternity; but the determination of this question must be left till we come into that state, when "we shall know even also as we are known".

2. The eternity of this happiness is the next and the last thing to be considered, and which is essential to it; for let the happiness of men be what it may, yet if it is to have an end, though at a great distance, the thought of that will greatly spoil the pleasure of it; but this happiness will never have an end; as appears by its names.

2a. By its being frequently called "eternal life, everlasting life," a life that will never end: the present life has an end; let a man live ever so long he dies at last; it is said of Methuselah, the oldest man, that he lived so many years, "and he died"; but he that lives and believes in Christ "shall never die"; though he may die corporally, he shall not die spiritually and eternally, and therefore must be everlastingly happy.

2b. It is a "glory," and it is called "eternal" glory, an "eternal weight" of glory, a crown of glory "that fadeth not away": the glory of kings and kingdoms continues not long, but passes away, and so their happiness is temporal and transitory; but that of the saints endures for ever (2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Pet. 5:10).

2c. It is an "house eternal in the heavens"; it consists of many rooms; there are many mansions, dwelling, abiding places for the saints in it; and those habitations are "everlasting habitations" (2 Cor. 5:1; Luke 16:8), houses on earth may be consumed by fire, or be pulled down by violence, or decay through length of time; or a man may be turned out of house and home; but nothing of this kind can befall the dwelling place of the saints in heaven, and them in that.

2d. It is an "inheritance," and an "eternal" one; an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away (Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 5:4). An inheritance on earth, a man may be dispossessed of by force or fraud; but an inheritance in heaven is "reserved" there, and so safe and secure; and is out of the reach of any to disturb the saints in their possession of it.

2e. It is a "city," and a "continuing" one; here the saints have none; but they seek one to come; a city which has foundations firm and sure, and can never be subverted (Heb. 11:10; 13:14), here cities of great antiquity and fame, of great

strength and glory, are destroyed, and come to nothing, and their memorial perishes with them; but this is a city that will endure to all eternity.

2f. It is a "kingdom," and an "everlasting" one (2 Pet. 1:11) it is the kingdom of Christ, of which there will be no end; in it the saints will reign with him for ever and ever: his spiritual and mediatorial kingdom, when the end cometh, will be delivered up to the Father; the millennium kingdom will be at an end when the thousand years are expired; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate state of glory, will never end.

2g. It is a country in which the saints are not sojourners, as here, where they continue but for a while; and so a better country than this; for there they will for ever dwell as in their own native land, being born from above, and partakers of the heavenly calling.

2h. It is expressed by "being with Christ," and which will be "for ever"; and with which words the saints are directed to comfort themselves now, that they shall be "ever with the Lord!" Eternity infinitely adds to him happiness of this state.

2i. The eternal purpose of God, which first gave birth to this state of happiness; the everlasting covenant of grace, in which it is secured; and the promise of it, made before the world began, confirm and ensure the everlasting continuance of it.

2j. Were there any fears of its ever ending, it would not be perfect happiness; but as "perfect love casteth out fear," so the full evidence that is given of the eternity of the saints' happiness, casts out all fear of its ever coming to an end: which, as it cannot be admitted, can never be an alloy unto it.